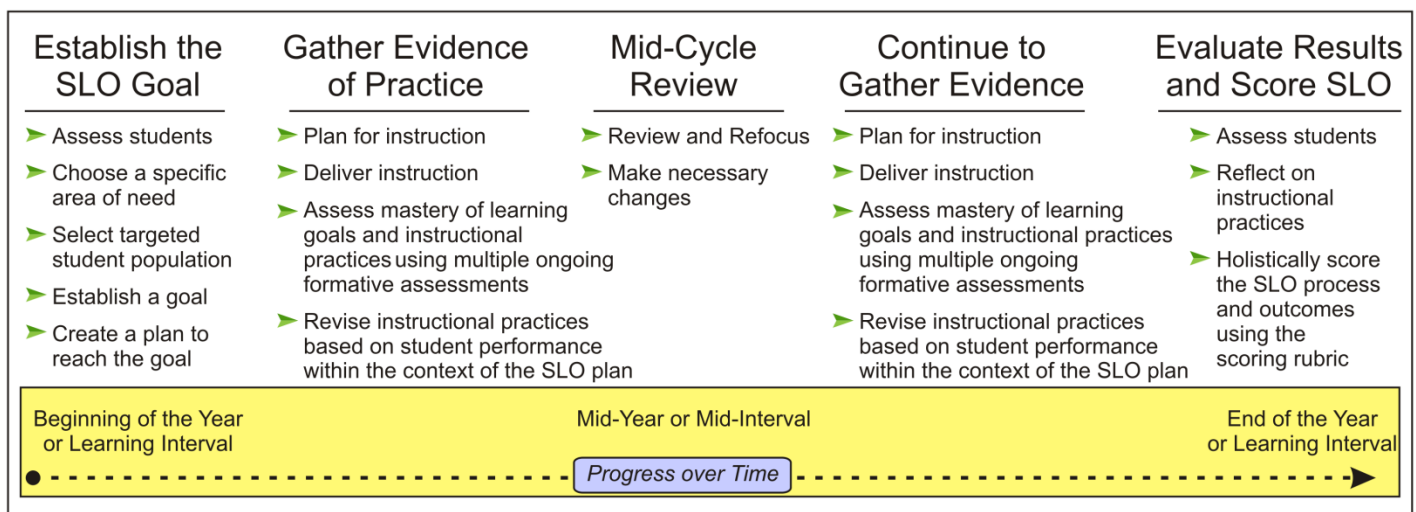The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the way that a balanced assessment framework can support the Student Learning Objectives or the School Learning Objectives (SLO) process for educators, and to review examples of commonly used assessments that may aid an educator and an evaluator in setting and measuring SLO processes.

The SLO Process and a Balanced Assessment Framework

The SLO process consists of four main elements spread out over a school year or learning interval:
- Establishing an appropriate SLO goal and plan to reach the goal
- Gathering evidence of instructional practices leading to improved student outcomes
- Conducting a mid-year or mid-interval review of progress
- Evaluating the final results and scoring the educator's SLO process and outcomes using the holistic rubric

Establish the SLO Goal	Gather Evidence of Practice	Mid-Cycle Review	Continue to Gather Evidence	Evaluate Results and Score SLO
➤ Assess students ➤ Choose a specific area of need ➤ Select targeted student population ➤ Establish a goal ➤ Create a plan to reach the goal	➤ Plan for instruction ➤ Deliver instruction ➤ Assess mastery of learning goals and instructional practices using multiple ongoing formative assessments ➤ Revise instructional practices based on student performance within the context of the SLO plan	➤ Review and Refocus ➤ Make necessary changes	➤ Plan for instruction ➤ Deliver instruction ➤ Assess mastery of learning goals and instructional practices using multiple ongoing formative assessments ➤ Revise instructional practices based on student performance within the context of the SLO plan	➤ Assess students ➤ Reflect on instructional practices ➤ Holistically score the SLO process and outcomes using the scoring rubric
Beginning of the Year or Learning Interval		Mid-Year or Mid-Interval		End of the Year or Learning Interval
		Progress over Time		

Educators use a variety of assessment tools to gather data about student performance when establishing an SLO goal. There are different "families" of assessment tools in a balanced assessment framework:
- **Benchmark (or Interim) Assessments**: Periodic diagnostic assessments that benchmark and monitor progress. (e.g., Measures of Academic Progress-MAP, STAR, Rubrics that benchmark over time)
- **Formative Assessments**: Daily, ongoing evaluations that quickly and immediately inform instructional practices that support student learning. (e.g., classroom assessments, AIMSweb, progress monitoring tools)
- **Summative Assessments**: Large scale standardized assessments that evaluate cumulative student learning. (e.g., ACT, Smarter Balanced Assessment, WKCE Science or Social Studies)

Every assessment tool has a specific intended use for measuring student learning. Determining the best assessment tool to use depends on aspects of the need, such as:
- The **specificity** of data needed
- The **kind** of data needed
- The **timing** of the assessment or amount of time between assessments
- The **frequency** of reassessment for the same information

A critical aspect of the SLO process is to evaluate how the decisions, practices and strategy choices that an educator makes in planning for and delivering instruction ultimately affect student progress toward a goal. Multiple measurements and assessments used as part of a balanced assessment framework are beneficial in helping educators triangulate data, validate practices, and support informed choices that lead to increased student outcomes.

It is also important to remember that how an assessment tool is used can change what kind of assessment tool it is. For instance, an assessment commonly used 2-3 times a year as a benchmark (interim) assessment (e.g., Measures of Academic Progress-MAP) could become a summative assessment if it was only used once a year, at the end of a school year, to measure the growth from the previous school year to that point.

The scope of what the assessment tool measures must match the amount of instruction or skills being assessed. For instance, formative assessment tools are intended to be used frequently and to assess fairly small amounts of progress, or to assess student mastery of smaller skills that support progress toward the larger goal. A summative assessment measures complex sets of skills or learning over a longer period of time.

Starting Strong: Using Benchmark Assessments to Develop the SLO

In a typical SLO process, you:
- Review a variety of assessments to determine academic needs
- Identify a specific group of students based on baseline analysis of student skills
- Identify a desired skill, growth or achievement goal for the targeted student population
- Develop a plan to guide the students to reach the goal using the SLO Process & Scoring Guide

Benchmark (or interim) assessments are assessments that are administered periodically, generating multiple data points across time, usually 2-3 times a year or during a learning interval (e.g., beginning – middle – end, or fall – winter – spring). They are used to "benchmark" or determine a student's or school's current status as it relates to a level of performance (e.g., grade level performance).
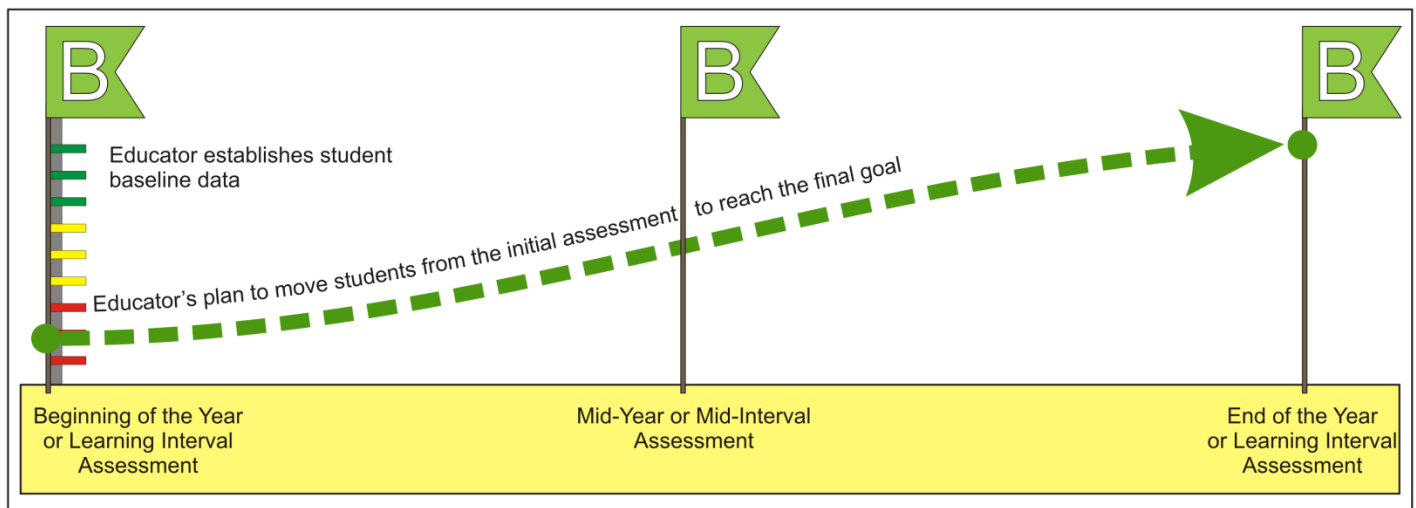
Educators use benchmark assessment tools at the beginning of the learning interval to gather baseline data on a student's current performance, and then will use the same tool or a comparable tool at the end of the interval to evaluate the growth made. Often the educator will use the tool at or around the mid-interval point as a way of knowing if the student is on track to meet the target. Using the same or comparable assessments gives the educator the ability to know where a student starts and then select a goal point on the same scale.

For example, a 1st grade educator may administer the Fountas and Pinnell assessments to determine a student's reading level at the beginning of the year. The student may demonstrate that they read at the "C" level, but the teacher knows that to be on target to perform at grade level, that student needs to reach level "J" by the end of the year. The teacher may set short term goals to get the student to Level "G" by the semester, and level "J" by the end. The educator assesses the student's reading level periodically (progress monitoring), and make adjustments to his or her instruction based on the student's progress.

Examples of benchmark (interim) assessments:

Assessment Name	Grades	Administration	Use of the Data
AIMSweb	4K-12th	Probes range in time to administer (1-10 minutes each); Benchmark probes are administered in Fall, Winter, and Spring; progress monitoring probes can be administered as frequently as weekly or monthly.	Data from probes is used to screen students for intervention and provide teachers ongoing progress monitoring for students receiving interventions. Note: AIMSweb probes can also be used as a formative assessment.
NWEA-MAP Measures of Academic Progress (Common Core version)	$2^{nd} – 8^{th}$ grades, infrequently used with high school students	Mathematics, Language Usage and Reading Goals Survey tests, approximately three hours (one hour per test), administered in Fall, Winter, and Spring.	Data is used as an instructional tool for informing instruction, creating flexible groups, identifying students for services or interventions, and placing students.
Teacher-created or department/district-created rubric to measure Problem Solving	High School	Used 2-3 times per year to determine a student's increased skills in problem solving	Data is used as an instructional tool for informing instruction.

Use the space below to identify benchmark assessments that are used in your instructional context:

| Assessment Name	Grades	Administration	Use of the Data

The key to student growth is finding the right stretch point for your SLO goal. The point that pushes a student past their comfort zone enough to engage them to reach a goal, but not too far away that the goal seems impossible to reach. Assessment data can help teachers find the right stretch point for each student.

Providing Instruction, Gathering Formative Data, and Evidence of Practice

Benchmark (interim) assessments are integrally helpful to an educator to know if they are on the path to achieving the goal, but they are only guideposts. The limitation of benchmark assessments is that they don't directly reveal how choices made during instruction have impacted student learning. To gain that understanding, educators use **formative practices and assessments**.

Formative Practices and Assessments are the instructional strategies that educators use to assess student learning on an ongoing basis. Sample strategies include spot questioning, progress monitoring assessments, quizzes, or discussions between student and teacher in which the teacher assesses a student's or group of students' learning. Formative practices are used at the beginning, during and/or at the end of a lesson. They are frequent, no-stakes "check-ins" administered quickly.
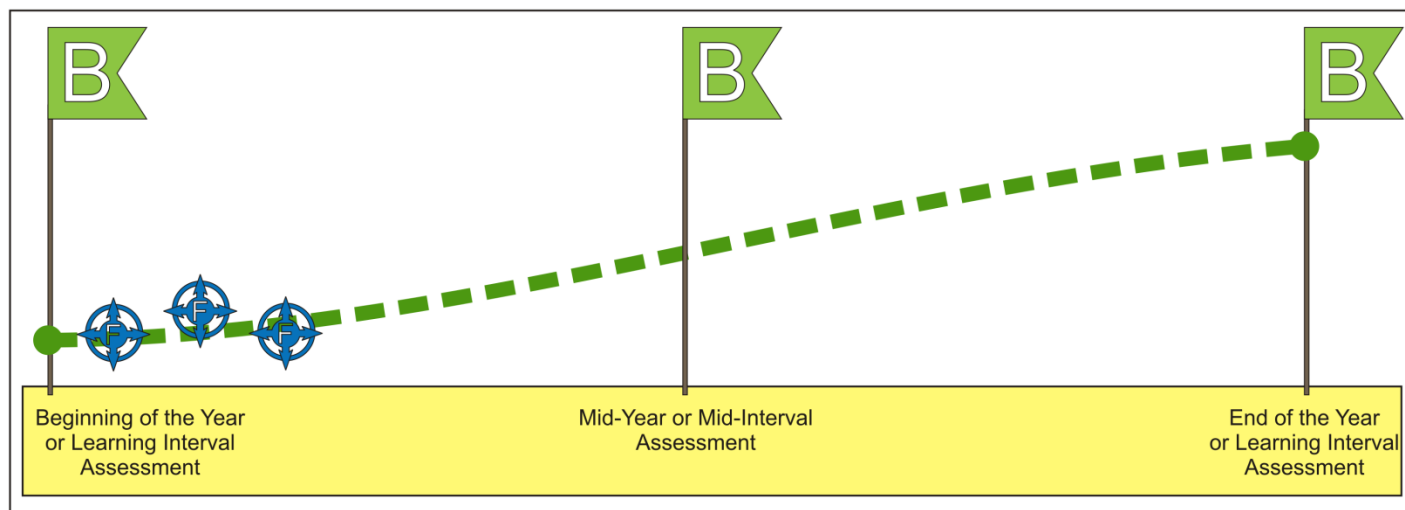
Educators may use multiple formative practices or assessments to monitor progress between benchmarks. The formative assessments provide critical feedback that helps the educator refine their approach and keep the student moving consistently toward the target. Benchmark and summative assessments are often thought of as assessments *of* learning, while formative assessments are assessments *for* learning.

**Examples of formative assessments:**

Assessment Name	Grades	Administration	Use of the Data
Teacher-created assessments and rubrics	4K – 12th	Variable length of time; teacher created and administered usually during less than one full class period. Could be paper, performance, or technology based.	Data is used to determine progress toward a goal with specific skill sets that support a larger goal.
STAR-Renaissance Learning Reading, Math, and Early Literacy	4K – 12th	Approximately 15-20 minutes per module; Benchmark probes are administered Fall, Winter, and Spring; progress monitoring probes can be administered as frequently as weekly or monthly	Data from probes is used to screen students for intervention and provide teachers ongoing progress monitoring for students receiving intervention. Note: STAR modules can be used as a benchmark assessment.
Odyssey-Compass Learning Custom Assessments	K – 8th	Variable length of time; teacher created and administered electronically	Data is used to determine progress toward a goal with specific skill sets that support a larger goal.

Use the space below to identify formative assessments that are used in your instructional context:

Assessment Name	Grades	Administration	Use of the Data

The Mid-Interval Review: Pause to Reflect, Refocus, and Re-evaluate

After creating an SLO goal and plan, the educator begins to implement the plan, gathering evidence of process and progress along the way. Around the halfway point in the learning interval (e.g., at the quarter or mid-semester for a semester-long interval, at the semester for a year-long interval), an educator administers a benchmark assessment. Benchmark assessments can be used again to get an idea of how much progress a student has made using the same scales or assessments that were used to generate the baseline data.
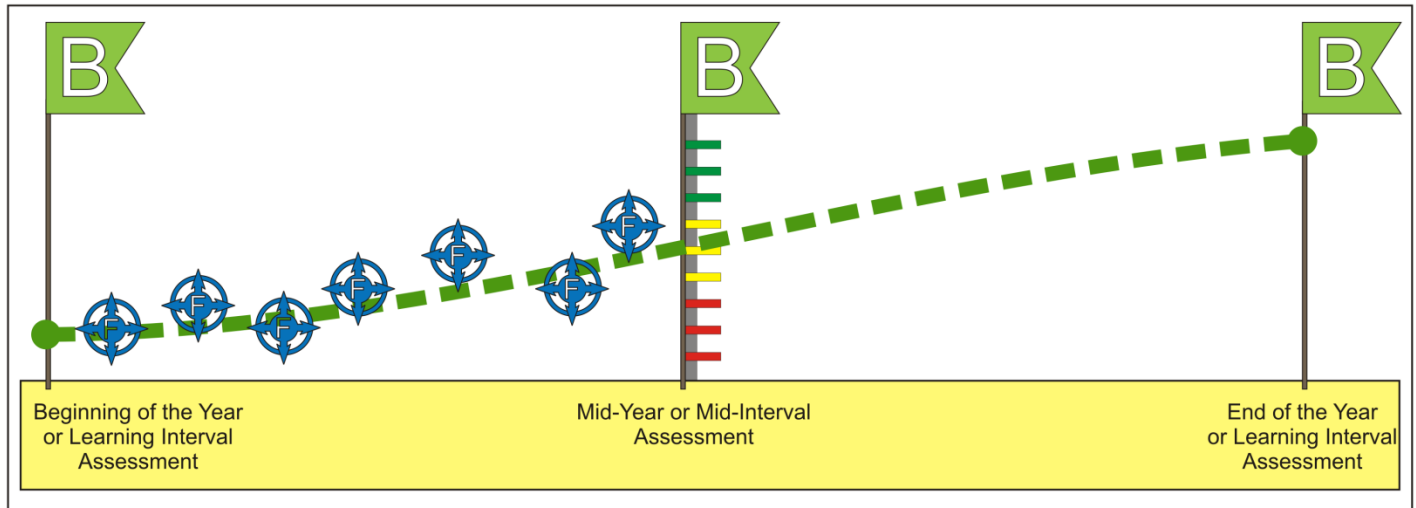
At the mid-interval point, the educator has two important sets of data upon which to draw:
- Two sets of benchmark assessment results
- Reflection on and documentation of the formative practices and assessments that they have used to guide student learning

The educator evaluates the students' progress and choices they have made. Based on this analysis, the educator may conclude that the SLO plan is on-track to meet the desired goal, or they may decide that the some aspect of the SLO plan or goal needs revision so that the SLO plan can generate the best possible student outcomes. For instance, the educator could discover:
- The SLO goal was set too low initially, as the students have almost reached the end-of-interval goal by the mid-interval point.
- The SLO goal was set too high initially, as the goal seems to be out of reach even though the students are making adequate progress.
- Students should be added to or removed from the targeted group.
- The educational strategies that the teacher is using are not as effective as they should be and students are not making adequate progress toward the goal, but the goal is clearly appropriate.

Evidence that an educator should gather and analyze throughout implementation of the SLO plan may include:
- Lesson plans (full or partial)
- Student feedback and reflections
- Personal observations and reflection, including team meeting notes
- Samples of student work
  - Work in progress or process examples
  - Final products or projects
  - Student responses contained in teacher-created formative or summative assessments
- Peer feedback from other teachers working on similar goals (especially important when setting team SLO goals)
- Peer observation data
- Short videos or movies of the teacher delivering instruction
- Benchmark (interim) or large-scale summative assessment results

Continuing Forward: Gathering Additional Data and Evidence of Practice

After the mid-interval review, educators continue to gather evidence of student progress through the use of formative practices and assessments. Over the course of a school year or learning interval, a typical path with multiple instructional practices, formative and benchmark assessments may look like this:
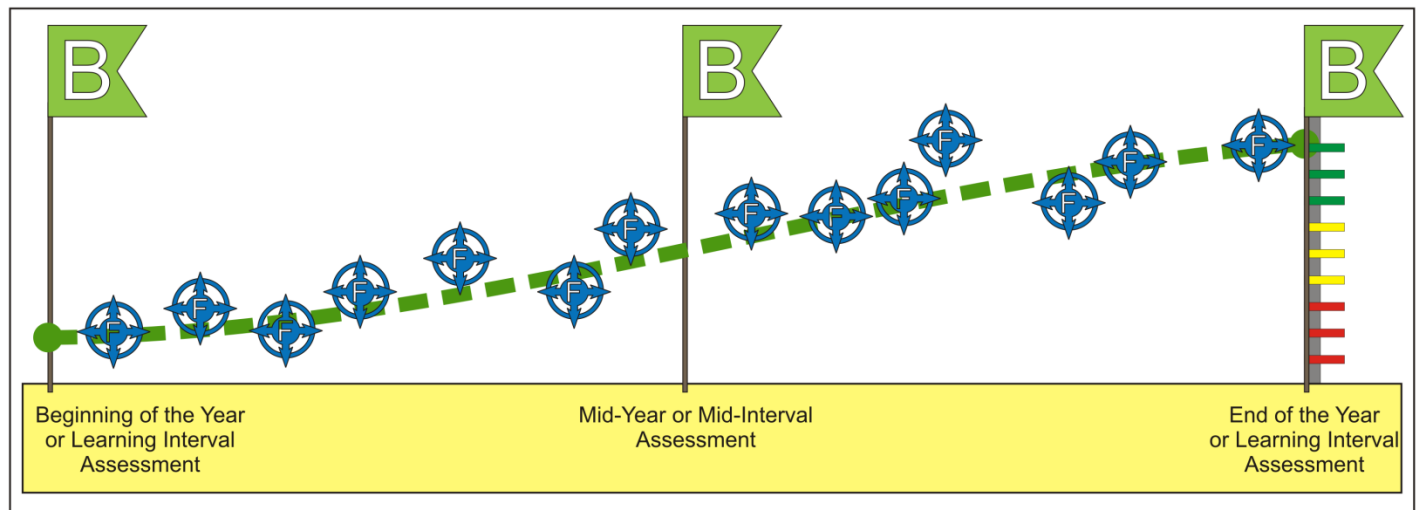
When holistically scoring the SLO(s) at the end of the process, the evaluator will need to see the documentation of an educator's formative practices and assessments that demonstrate how an educator guided their students to reach their goal. The conversations between an educator and an evaluator will center on showing evidence of what an educator has done, rather than evaluating only what their students have achieved strictly through assessment data.

When ongoing formative assessment data shows that the educator's practices and decision-making is yielding improved student achievement, the educator knows that they are making the right kind of progress and their choices are validated. When formative assessment data shows that the student performance is declining or does not match benchmark data, the educator needs to change their approach, strategies or progress monitoring tools.

Reaching the End of the SLO Process

At the end of a year or learning interval, the student or school is often measured for proficiency or mastery using the benchmark assessment or a summative assessment.

Summative assessments are large-scale (relative to instruction) assessments that are given very infrequently, and measure overall student growth. Often, summative assessments are used to measure multiple skills at the same time, and are not very useful in crafting individual instruction strategies. Item analysis of summative assessments is valuable in evaluating the alignment of curriculum to standards on a larger scale. Data from summative assessments may not be available during the current year of the Effectiveness Cycle (e.g., Advanced Placement results come in July, Smarter Balanced results come in summer).
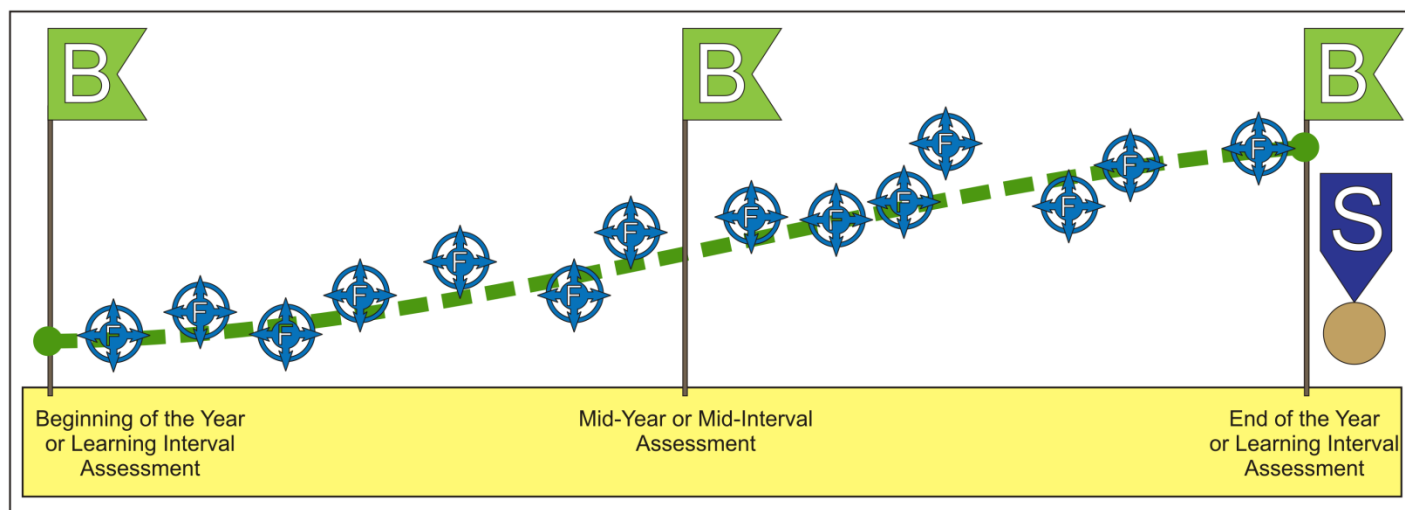
The summative assessment may also occur prior to the end of the interval (e.g., ACT, ACT WorkKeys). Summative assessment achievement data may provide important triangulation and validation of the results from benchmark and formative assessments.

Depending on the assessment tool, summative assessments may occur prior to the end of the Learning Cycle, yet they still reveal important information about students' progress toward a learning goal
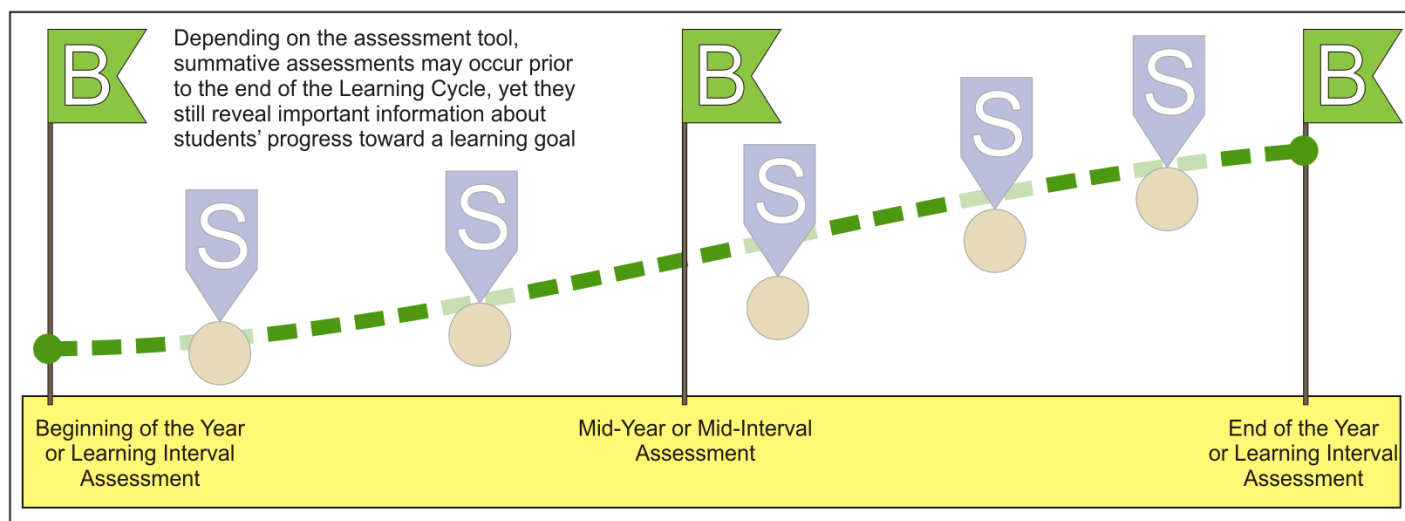
Use the space below to identify summative assessments that are used in your instructional context:

Assessment Name	Grades	Administration	Use of the Data

Final Scoring of the SLO process

To summarize the process, the final benchmark assessment tells the educator if their students reached their goal. Ultimately, the totality of the evidence an educator gathers during the year informs the scoring process. By the end of the year or interval, it should be fairly easy for an educator to use the gathered evidence to demonstrate their process and outcome of the SLO. It should also be very easy to use this evidence to clearly reflect on their practices and draw conclusions that inform their practices in the future. Finally, the educator uses the SLO Scoring Rubric to determine a final score based on process and outcomes.

SLO Scoring Rubric

Score	Criteria	Description (not exhaustive)
4	Student growth for the SLO(s) has exceeded the goal(s). Educator engaged in a comprehensive, data-driven SLO process that resulted in exceptional growth.	Evidence indicates exceptional growth for all/nearly all of target population. Educator set up rigorous, superior goal(s); skillfully used appropriate assessments, continuously monitored progress; strategically revised instruction based on progress monitoring data.
3	Student growth for SLO(s) has met goal(s). Educator engaged in a data-driven SLO process that resulted in student growth.	Evidence indicates substantial growth for most of the target population. Educator set up attainable goal(s); used appropriate assessments, monitored progress; adjusted instruction based on progress monitoring data.
2	Student growth for SLO(s) has partially met goal(s). Educator engaged in a SLO process that resulted in inconsistent student growth.	Evidence indicates some growth for most of the target population. Educator set up goal(s); used assessments, inconsistently monitored progress; inconsistently or inappropriately adjusted instruction.
1	Student growth for SLO(s) has not met goal(s). Educator engaged in a SLO process that resulted in minimal or no student growth.	Evidence indicates substantially low or inconsistent growth for most of the target population. Educator set inappropriate goal(s); inconsistently or used assessments, failed to monitor progress; failed to adjust instruction based on progress monitoring data.